

# REPORT FROM THE SUMMIT ON SCHOOL SAFETY SOLUTIONS



A Summit Presented by  
Congressman Elijah E. Cummings and  
State Superintendent Nancy S. Grasmick



June 2008



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# REPORT FROM THE SUMMIT ON SCHOOL SAFETY SOLUTIONS

## **Introduction to the Summit on School Safety Solutions**

Nationwide, school violence and reported crime are on the decline. Maryland schools remain essentially safe places for children. But our schools can and must be made even safer. Consider these statistics for Maryland public schools: more than one-quarter of students reported being harassed or bullied on school property during the past twelve months; 1,800 weapons were found on school grounds last year; students sustained more than 6,200 physical attacks at school last year, and teachers sustained 1,500. Deeply troubled by such statistics, and by recent incidents of violence in Maryland schools, Congressman Elijah Cummings and State Superintendent of Schools Nancy Grasmick convened the Summit on School Safety Solutions in June 2008 at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County.

Together, 287 participants explored issues, asked tough questions, shared viewpoints, and then proposed solutions to increase safety in Maryland public schools. Participants hailed from a variety of backgrounds and experiences—parents, teachers, school and school system administrators, higher education representatives, state and local government agency personnel, non-profit agency representatives, church leaders, law enforcement officers, legal system representatives, elected officials, and, most importantly, students. The diverse group of attendees shared a common goal: making schools safer places for children to learn.

# A Pre-Summit Survey Collected Participants' Views On The Root Causes Of School Violence

The causes of school violence are frequently discussed, well documented, and often lamented. Therefore, by design, the Summit on School Safety Solutions focused on solutions to school violence rather than causes. Congressman Cummings and Dr. Grasmick were committed to a Summit that would not be “just another meeting,” but a productive opportunity for stakeholders to generate solutions, actions, and, most of all, positive change. This does not mean, however, that root causes of school violence were not considered. In fact, Summit invitees were encouraged to complete an online survey on what they perceive are the causes of school violence. Results from the survey, stated briefly below and in more detail in Appendix C, were used to generate questions for the Summit panel discussions.

The survey defined four main categories of causes: individual student factors, school factors, family factors, and community factors. In each of the categories, survey respondents were given a list of factors and asked to rank the top two they considered the most important contributing factors to school violence. Respondents were then asked to rank the four categories—individual student, school, family, and community—according to their contribution to school violence. Lastly, respondents were given the opportunity to write in any causes of school violence they felt were significant and that had not been included in the survey.

A short summary of the results follows. The percentages given indicate the number of points the factor earned; each person's number 1 ranked factor earned two points and number 2 ranked factor earned one point.

## Individual Student Factors—Top Two Ranked Factors

Students commit violence because...

1. ...don't have effective problem-solving skills (29%)
2. ...have poor self-discipline (13%)

## School Factors—Top Two Ranked Factors

Students commit violence because...

- 1... are not consistently disciplined when they misbehave (19.9%)
2. [tie]...don't have enough access to school counselors, social workers, school psychologists, and/or other services (14.4%)
2. [tie]...don't have adults they feel they can confide in (14.4%)

## Family Factors—Top Two Ranked Factors

Students commit violence because...

- 1... haven't been taught values that promote non-violent problem solving (29.4%)
- 2...are not effectively supervised by family (17.4%)

## Community Factors—Top Two Ranked Factors

Students commit violence because...

- 1... are frequently exposed to violence in the community (28.4%)
- 2...don't have access to organizations that are a positive influence (20.8%)

## All Categories of Factors, Ranked

Respondents identified family factors as the primary contributor to school violence (33.9%). School factors were identified as the least significant contributor to school violence (19.1%).

1. Family (33.9%)
2. Student (24.5%)
3. Community (22.5%)
4. School (19.1%)

For more information on the survey, see Appendix B (survey instrument) and Appendix C (survey results).

# Keynote Speakers and Panel Discussions Explored Key Issues

The Summit featured two keynote speakers, Mr. Ivan Juzang and Dr. Sam Goldstein. Together the speakers provided essential information related to students—the importance of culture, their psychology and development, the relevance and influence of the community and media, and more. The speakers also addressed the roles of schools and educators in engaging and communicating with students and working with them to prevent violence.

## Ivan Juzang

Mr. Ivan Juzang, founder and president of MEE Productions, Inc., is a nationally recognized expert on urban teens and youth violence. In his remarks Mr. Juzang particularly emphasized the importance of strong relationships between adults and students. He referenced MEE Productions' 2002 report, *Inner-City Truth: An Urban Youth Lifestyle Study*, that illustrated the powerful influence of such relationships.

A study of students from low-income families throughout the U.S. found that students who were not sexually active, were less likely to drop out of school, had attended church in the past month, enjoyed reading, and worked less had one thing in common. They were able to identify three to four non-parental adults who cared about them. Otherwise, they had the same environmental conditions (e.g., single-parent households, low family income).

Mr. Juzang's presentation advocated a number of additional approaches and techniques to increasing school safety, including:

- Taking a preventative, rather than punitive, approach to improving school safety.
- Focusing on early education, early literacy, tutoring and mentoring, and healthy adult-student relationships.
- Learning about students' culture and how they view the world.
- Identifying peer group leaders and engaging them in school safety efforts.

- Helping students learn alternatives to violence. Young people don't understand the consequences of violence, and they are not aware of alternatives.
- Having zero tolerance for violence without demonizing students.
- Adopting a prevention-retention-recovery approach to school safety. Prevention includes parenting classes, early literacy initiatives, and violence prevention messages for young children. Retention includes tutoring, after school support and activities, career mentoring, and conflict resolution education. Recovery includes efforts to recover youth leaders in the community—encouraging them to come back to school and to bring their friends with them. Recovery also includes sending messages to the community that education is for everyone, including parents.

## Sam Goldstein

Dr. Sam Goldstein is a psychologist with expertise in school psychology, child development, and neuropsychology. He is an author, faculty member at the University of Utah School of Medicine, and national expert on effective strategies for defiant youth.

In his presentation, Dr. Goldstein emphasized the natural qualities of children. Children are instinctually optimistic. They instinctively believe that if they try they will eventually succeed. Children are also intrinsically motivated. It is the pleasure of accomplishment, of doing, that drives them. Children are also altruistic, and when we allow them to help, we communicate that they are needed and are part of the group. According to Dr. Goldstein, once students enter school, motivation is quickly externalized through a system of rewards and punishments. Schools should instead build on the natural optimism, motivation, and altruism of children.

Schools should also be aware of the characteristics of "resilient children." The resilient child experiences adversity but continues to function and grows up to be healthy and productive. Some of the characteristics of resilient youth include: having empathy, not being afraid to make mistakes, being able to solve problems and make decisions, accepting responsibility for their behavior, and optimism.

Dr. Goldstein echoed Mr. Juzang's earlier remarks regarding children's need to have strong, positive relationships with non-parental adults, calling such relationships a "protective factor." He also advocated early identification for students who are struggling to develop self control. Identifying these students early and intervening can help prevent more serious behavior problems, and school violence, later. Dr. Goldstein also shared the "Five C Model" in which schools have five broad goals for students:

**Competence**—academic and social.

**Confidence**—a positive identity.

**Connectedness**—to feel part of their classroom.

**Character**—helping others is the best way to build it.

**Caring and Compassion**—children are cared about, and they are caring and compassionate with each other.

*Be intelligent and ethical. Be respectful.  
Teach them without stealing away their  
hope and dignity.*

—Dr. Sam Goldstein

## Panel Discussion One

The first panel discussion was moderated by Congressman Cummings. Panel members were Ivan Juzang, Chief Marshall T. Goodwin (Police Chief, Baltimore City Public Schools), Reverend Benjamin Long (Rehoboth Light of the World Church), Rachel Wohl (Executive Director, Mediation and Conflict Resolution Office), Keith Smith (Student, Elijah Cummings Youth Program in Israel), and Major Joe Montminy (Charles County Sheriff's Office).

Congressman Cummings began the panel discussion by referencing the pre-summit survey on the root causes of school violence and the individual student factors that contribute to it. From there the panel entered a discussion that covered the value of building students' conflict resolution skills and using peer mediation in schools, engaging peer leaders, involving students in preventing violence, the role of the church in reducing violence (offering hope, providing mentoring and other programs), the role of resource/police

officers in schools, the effects of the media, community, and peers on students, and involving parents.

After the moderated panel discussion concluded, audience members were invited to ask questions. These questions were wide ranging, but much discussion centered around parents—how to involve and engage them, if/how schools can hold parents responsible for being involved, and the importance of communicating to parents the availability of government and non-profit agency services.

## Panel Discussion Two

The second panel discussion was moderated by Superintendent Grasmick. Panel members were Sam Goldstein, Michael Gimbel (Director, Substance Abuse Education, Sheppard Pratt Health System), Donald Lilley (Principal, Annapolis High School), Lavinia Lee Rice-Fitzpatrick (Adjunct Professor, Coppin State University), Brian Schiffer (Teacher, Baltimore County Public Schools), and Aaron Prince (Student Ambassador, Doris M. Johnson at Lake Clifton Complex).

Dr. Grasmick opened the panel discussion by asking panel member Dr. Lilley, principal of Annapolis High School, the techniques and strategies he found most effective in improving safety at his school. From there, the panel began a discussion that included the importance of strong relationships within schools (among faculty, staff, and students) and strong relationships between the school and parents and the school and the community. The discussion also included the need for consistent discipline; the power of character education, peer mediation, service-learning and other student-driven initiatives; the challenge of drug use among students and its relationship to violence; and the need for students to understand alternative options to negative behaviors (e.g., drug use, dropping out of school).

After the moderated panel discussion concluded, Dr. Grasmick opened the floor to questions from audience members. Participants made a number of important points. Just some of the sentiments expressed included:

- Principals of schools formally identified as needing to improve safety are given the power to make changes. We need to empower all principals to take actions to prevent violence—before there is a need for identification.



- Maintain Maryland's commitment to the Arts.
- There's not enough love in schools, coming from the top down.
- Character education really helps. It should be in all schools in the state of Maryland.
- We've talked about getting students involved and talking. But what are we going to do about making sure our teachers know exactly what to do?
- Principals should make clear that teachers are expected to have relationships with and connections to their students.
- Focus on early intervention. First-grade teachers can identify very accurately which students are going to be having trouble learning in high school. We should listen.

## Breakout Groups Brainstormed Solutions

After several hours spent learning and talking about the issues, Summit participants broke into small groups to generate solutions to increasing school safety. The groups were heterogeneous with the exception of students, who were kept together to ensure there were solutions specifically generated by students for students. Each breakout group was assigned two facilitators who kept the discussions focused on solutions and took notes on the discussions. Within the breakout groups, each person was asked to propose a solution. Participants then shared and discussed the proposed solutions and ultimately identified two to four priority solutions to present to the entire Summit (see the next section of the report). The individual solutions were kept and are recorded here.

### Solutions Proposed by Individuals

*Note: Each bullet represents one individual's submission. Some bullets contain more than one suggestion.*

### Group One (students)

- Establish a strong sense of individual student desire to achieve for self; to subsequently increase student involvement.
- More student-to-student programs.
- Allow students to be more involved and help make decisions. Also express the self.
- Instill the idea in youth that "My effort is for Me!"
- Big Buddy program to make schools more of a family community.
- More thought into and effort into Big Brothers, Big Sisters programs.
- To ensure safety we should create more programs, like peer mediation, with students involved.
- Communication with all students! More teachers who care and are not afraid to care about how the children's lives are going and are not afraid to talk about the problems.
- Teachers need to learn how to relate, bend, and how to be real with students to understand what they are going through and truly help kids with what they are going through.
- More hall monitors!! Bring students together.
- Children and students need to learn to adapt.
- Consistent parent involvement.
- Community summits. All different communities have separate summits to find answers. Representatives have one big summit/meeting to enforce ideas into a plan.

## Group Two

- Replace suspensions with referrals to services.
- After-school programs.
- Ensure that students are provided all possible supports to succeed at the earliest time and throughout their educational experience.
- Mental health approach at red, yellow, and green zones. [child development]
- Relationships at all levels. “Team Building Workshops.”
- Student ambassadors. (Students involved in solutions.)
- Adequate communication from staff to students through listening, acknowledgement, respect, kindness, love, empathy, smiles, direct eye contact, and much patience.
- Ensure each student has a positive relationship with a non-parental adult (from the school or larger community) who will encourage him or her to attend school, achieve, etc.
- Replace police in Baltimore City Public Schools with trained behavioral management teams that are supervised by mental health professionals.

## Group Three

- More adult involvement in the education process (other than teachers). Responsibility for our kids.
- Have more family and student support teams to foster positive family school partnerships.
- Have high expectations for all students; build attendance and academic incentives; engage parents meaningfully in school.
- Children are being parented by other children who never learned and cannot teach self-respect, discipline, or appropriate behaviors. It all starts with the parents.
- Involve family and community in problem solving.
- One-mile radius: Organize churches, businesses, and community organizations in a one-mile radius of schools in school improvement. Focus on three: 1)rites of passage 2) 8-15 hours after school per week

- Carrot/stick approach to get more parents/families engaged (e.g., link tax policy to education policy). (HB 1122)
- Have parent and child activities; Get parents more involved; Ask the students what solutions do they have; Be aware of gang involvement; Identify and address problems early; Identify students’ needs.
- Hold students and adults accountable for actions; Instill responsibility to peers; Build positive environment for learning.
- Develop, implement, and sustain positive social/behavioral connections through social/emotional IQ.
- Tiered student/school intervention; Policy/regulation changes; Laws; Mental health support; Funding.
- Intervention, education and conferencing to change behavior.
- Focus on instruction—student engagement, early intervention—teacher professional development—data collection/analysis—parent training—community working together—Involve businesses—Alternative schooling.
- Block scheduling—step toward solution—for middle schools and high schools.
- Develop a culture of civility in schools.
- Institute classroom jobs and service learning.
- Students celebrate others’ success.
- SRO [school resource officer] program and a close, positive relationship with the police department.

## Group Four

- Infuse character education in meaningful ways in the school curriculum.
- Capturing kids’ hearts—teen leadership.
- Emphasize and highlight student achievement and service to our communities through the media!
- Address the needs of the total child—academic, physical and mental health, spiritual and character development through shared accountability and partnerships across educators, community agencies and family systems.

## Group Four- continued

- Establish relationships by listening and doing.
- Research/gather data surrounding metal detectors and police presences and the effects they have on student behavior before we ensure security presence in schools.
- Need for expanded mental health supports in schools—psychologists, etc.
- Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) program; adequate staffing resources.
- Total community involvement in whatever strategy is chosen by school system, e.g., PBIS, Character Counts, etc.
- Community-based support program for suspended or at-risk students. (SHARP-Montgomery County)
- Increased publicity of resources available to parents, communities, and agencies.
- Early behavior assessment in PreK and K classes to teach behavior.
- Early positive behavioral interventions in small classes.
- Finding appropriate assessment tools for programs/activities such as character education and bullying prevention.
- Telling stories program.
- Engagement of more parents in the education/support of their children.
- Involve and engage parents (parents, school, community partnership). But how?
- Have a parent piece to the character education programs.
- Provide more supports to families.
- Increased opportunities to build relationships, including mentoring programs and parental involvement.
- Student-driven character education program. (Individualized for each school!)
- Develop a climate nurturing for students to learn—positive support for students.
- Early intervention/identification.
- Embedding the PBIS and character education in a classroom/school with caring teachers will reduce violence in schools.
- Building positive self-esteem.
- Building relationships.
- Develop and implement better relationships between students, peers, teachers and administrators—more conflict resolution sessions.
- Teacher training (relationship building/oral culture).
- Teach communication skills.
- Listening to students and their parents/caregivers while teaching them to listen to each other.
- Early (i.e., birth) and continual intervention for children identified from “at risk” families.
- Early Childhood ↔ Literacy → Adult Education
- Reform and upgrade the role of student councils.
- Prevention, retention and recovery as a way of creating choices for kids, beginning with children at a very early age (preK); Teacher training and development aimed at increasing ability to listen to students, to handle anger and challenges, and to create children with resilience.
- Increase: 1) tele-class programs (telephone conference education), 2) multicultural materials and awareness (staff as well as students), 3) healthy foods and snacks to improve general well-being.
- Peer to peer enterprises (e.g., mentoring, mediation, small business development); establish cluster centers (i.e., multifaceted service delivery centers) in schools.
- School-based mental health.
- Safe learning environment—only in a safe school can children learn and teachers teach. Baltimore County has a model School Resource Officer (SRO) program. I would urge MSDE to study this program and implement the program state-wide. I would be happy to offer more information!
- Move the SRO program from secondary schools to elementary schools.
- Positive discipline, mentoring.
- Smaller classes.
- Incentives.

## Group Five

- Start with the students—they are stakeholders.
- Allow school options/choices for students.
- Listen to students—what are their problems? “Hear us.”
- Students teach students conflict resolution practices!

## Group Six

- School uniforms.
- More effective, functioning, fun after-school programs!
- Comprehensive alternative schools.
- School resource officers in each school.
- Include family and consumer sciences in adult education programs.
- Reinstitute credit for family consumer sciences for graduation.
- Teacher training in anger management.
- Professional development (peer mediation, conflict resolution) for all staff.
- Must be trained in de-escalating problems.
- Teacher training: staff.
- Staff and student training—increasing level of acceptance.
- Teacher education and support in being communicators with students.
- Required teacher professional development—character education, conflict resolution, communication, behavioral interventions.
- Professional development in effective, respectful communication.
- Building strong relationships.
- Strong, enforceable discipline codes.
- Each school needs to identify what are the local issues that are causing fear and anxiety on the part of children.
- Building relationships (staff, students, parents and the community).
- Schools that are safe and non-threatening for both students and staff, so relationships are valued and so teaching and learning can take place.
- Communicate consistently with parents!
- Consistent implementation of behavior policies.
- Teacher collaboration focused on individual students.
- Provide resources/programs dealing with bullying and harassment.
- Provide programs to teach good parenting skills.
- Use resources in school systems to identify reasons of violence—too many outside experts and different programs.
- Use more community volunteers.
- Local school systems should be allowed to use federal funding to support initiatives that are not necessarily research based. We lose good initiatives this way. (Intuition tells me mentoring has positive outcomes. I don't need data!)
- Engage service (volunteer) organizations in elementary, middle, high school.
- Look at the technology kids access (myspace.com).
- Cell phones
- Establish partnerships (in school and community) to work toward common goals.
- Focus groups, education, communication state-wide and countywide among all stakeholders to plan, do, study, revise school safety issue 'til we get it right.
- Encourage parents to get involved!
- Engagement of entire school—students, staff, “parents,” community.
- Remove political agenda and stop stovepipe mentality.
- Give children hope.
- Fund, strengthen, expand early education programs.
- Using whatever resources necessary, every child will leave elementary school able to read.
- Explain the concept of education to students.
- Emphasis on staff training (administrators, teachers, bus drivers, hall monitors, etc.) in conflict resolution education (including communication skills).
- Integration of skills-based CRE (Conflict Resolution Education) into the curriculum at all levels.
- Establish statewide expectations and procedures for training, coaching, and mentoring necessary to create safe and supportive learning environments in all of Maryland's classrooms, schools, and communities.

# Breakout Groups Shared Priority Solutions

Each breakout group was asked to identify two to three priority solutions to forward to the whole group. Here are the priority solutions for each group.

## Group One (students)

- 1) Consistent community and parent involvement (e.g. summits/conferences, etc.).
- 2) Teachers and students need to relate and communicate on a more personal and professional level where the school is still functional on a respectful level.

## Group Two

- 1) Professional development that translates to improvement in school culture/climate:
  - Child development
  - Classroom management
  - Relationship development/listening (The expectation that teachers will have relationships with students.)
  - Behavioral health screening
  - Teacher/student communication
- 2) Involve administrators, staff, students, parents, and community in identifying “safety” as a priority.
- 3) Ensure supports and services, including mental health, are provided for all students at all levels of need (public health model).

## Group Three

- 1) Parents, families and communities focused on school attendance, reducing suspensions, and homework/out-of-school learning.
- 2) Focus on positive social/behavioral connections.
- 3) Increase access to early interventions for behavioral and scholastic issues.

## Group Four

- 1) Create an inventory of effective research-based programs to address students’ needs.
- 2) Reassess professional development training (include higher education) to include the whole child, e.g., academics, cultural and behavior, parents, key community advocates, resource offices, etc.
- 3) Allocate resources: Child care to enable parents to join the forces.

- 4) Giving students a voice in the process.

## Group Five

- 1) Schools should state the objective is the “relationship”: with students, with staff, with parents, with community.
- 2) Develop a prevention-retention-recovery model of response in secondary schools.
- 3) Standardize the problem by accountability, consistency, transparency of data.
- 4) Mobilize organizations (state, religious, health, etc.) to match people in one-to-one mentoring relationships with at-risk students.

## Group Six

- 1) Training to create a safe learning environment
  - Classroom management
  - Anger management
  - Conflict resolution
  - Problem solving
  - Peer mediation
  - Consistent implementation of behavior policies
  - Engaging families
  - PBIS
- 2) Students
  - Building relationships with students
  - Listening to students
  - Student survey (fears)
  - Needs assessment with students
  - Instruction for students in creating safe learning environments
  - Student forums
  - Involving students affected by violence in solutions.
- 3) Services
  - PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports)—continuum
  - Resources to match the level of needs of students
  - Alternative schools and programs (continuum)
  - School-based programs and services (alternative)
  - School resource officers

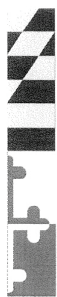
# **Dr. Grasmick and Congressman Cummings Outlined Next Steps**

After the priority solutions from the breakout groups were reviewed with the whole group, Dr. Grasmick and Congressman Cummings identified the next steps to be taken by the State.

- 1) Create (and distribute to all participants) a report from the summit that includes all of the individual solutions suggested as well as the priority solutions.
- 2) Hold a student summit on school safety to engage students statewide and to ensure their voices are heard.
- 3) Work to standardize behavior expectations and discipline codes and definitions across the state. The lack of comparable expectations and codes is not fair to students, and the lack of comparable definitions and data collection among school systems hampers the State's ability to collect sound, reliable data on school violence.
- 4) Form a small action group to act on the solutions generated today.



# Appendix A: Letter of Invitation



## *A Summit on School Safety Solutions*

**Presented by:** Congressman Elijah E. Cummings & State Superintendent Nancy S. Grasmick  
Tuesday, June 3, 2008 8:30 a.m. — 4:00 p.m. University of Maryland, Baltimore County



May 14, 2008

Dear Friend of Education:

You are invited to attend **A Summit on School Safety Solutions** on Tuesday, June 3, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:15 p.m., on the campus of the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. This will be an interactive, solutions-focused Summit.

The morning keynote address will be delivered by Mr. Ivan Juzang, a nationally recognized expert on urban teens and youth violence. The afternoon keynote speaker will be Dr. Sam Goldstein, a national expert on resiliency and effective strategies for responding to defiant youth. Each keynote address will be followed by a panel discussion that will allow for audience questions and input. In addition, small breakout sessions in the afternoon will provide participants an opportunity to discuss the issues further and to recommend solutions. The final session will include all attendees and will culminate in the identification of priority solutions. Continental breakfast and lunch will be provided, and parking will be available free of charge (please see enclosed parking map).

Invitations have been sent to local, state, and federal elected officials, local school system staff, higher education representatives, experts in the field of school safety and mental health, state and local law enforcement, numerous association representatives, parents, students, and the media. Attendance is by invitation only, and invitations are not transferable.

**Early registration for the Summit is critical, as seating is limited and will be filled on a first-come/first-served basis.** You may register by phone at 410-767-0230 or by email at [khicks@msde.state.md.us](mailto:khicks@msde.state.md.us). Upon registration, we ask that you participate in a survey that will guide discussion throughout the day. Because the Summit will focus on *solutions*, this survey will obtain feedback as to what you believe are the major *causes* of youth violence. The survey can be accessed through the MSDE web site: [www.MarylandPublicSchools.org](http://www.MarylandPublicSchools.org). (The **In Focus** section will link you to the survey.) You can access the survey directly at <http://websurveyor.msde.state.md.us/wsb.dll/s/25ga5>. Deadline for survey completion is May 22.

We hope you will be able to join us as one of 300 key stakeholders working together to ensure that all Maryland schools provide a safe environment for students, teachers, and administrators.

Sincerely,

Nancy S. Grasmick  
State Superintendent of Schools

Rep. Elijah E. Cummings  
7th Congressional District of Maryland

# Appendix B: Pre-summit Survey on Causes of School Violence

## Summit on School Safety Solutions

### Survey – Causes of School Violence

You are being asked to complete this survey because you have been invited to attend the June 3, 2008 *Summit on School Safety Solutions* co-sponsored by Congressman Elijah E. Cummings and State Superintendent of Schools Nancy S. Grasmick. The Summit will focus on *solutions* to violence in schools.

Before the Summit begins, we would like to ask you to identify what, in your opinion, are the primary underlying causes of violence in schools. This important feedback will provide us with a starting point as we work together to develop solutions to address this troubling issue. Your response is completely confidential. We will not be able to identify you from your response. The survey will take about 5 minutes to complete.

Thank you for taking a few minutes to provide us with this important information.

**1) Please choose the role that best describes you (select one):**

- ☐ Student
- ☐ Parent
- ☐ Educator
- ☐ Education administrator
- ☐ Other state or local government agency personnel
- ☐ Non-profit agency representative
- ☐ Faith-based organization representative
- ☐ Law enforcement/Legal system
- ☐ Elected official
- ☐ Other (please specify)

If you selected other please specify:

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A single episode of school violence may have multiple causes, the combination of which triggers school violence. These deep, root causes must be identified and addressed in order to eliminate school violence. Root causes may be factors related to the individual student who commits the violence, the student's school, the student's family, and the student's community. The following questions ask you about root causes of this violent behavior.

## Individual Student Factors

Choosing from the list below, please rank the 2 primary student-related reasons for school violence, where 1 is the most important and 2 is the second most important.

Students commit violence because they...

1) Choose One

2) Choose One

Options:

- ...are frustrated due to their poor academic performance
- ...don't have good relationships with adults at school
- ...are trying to protect themselves from bullying, gangs, or violence
- ...have poor self-discipline
- ...choose to engage in antisocial behaviors
- ...have mental health issues
- ...are using drugs and/or alcohol
- ...don't have effective problem-solving skills
- ...are victims of abuse
- ...have been exposed to harmful environmental factors
- ...have low self esteem

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## School Factors

Choosing from the list below, please rank the 2 primary school-related reasons for school violence, where 1 is the most important and 2 is the second most important.

Students commit violence because they...

1) Choose One

2) Choose One

Options:

- ...aren't challenged or motivated by instruction
- ...are not expected to perform well in school
- ...do not receive instruction that meets their individual needs
- ...have teachers who are inexperienced in classroom management
- ...do not clearly understand what behavior is expected of them in school
- ...are not consistently disciplined when they misbehave

- ...are in schools where there is a lot of violence
- ...have school administrators who are inexperienced in maintaining school-wide discipline
- ...are in schools with high turnover of staff
- ...don't have enough access to school counselors, social workers, school psychologists, and/or other services
- ...don't have adults they feel they can confide in

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## Family Factors

Choosing from the list below, please rank the 2 primary family-related reasons for school violence, where 1 is the most important and 2 is the second most important.

Students commit violence because they...

1) Choose One

2) Choose One

Options:

- ...live in families that are under economic stress
- ...haven't been taught values that promote non-violent problem solving
- ...are not effectively supervised by family
- ...are neglected by their parents or guardians
- ...live in violent homes
- ...have family or live with people who support or encourage aggression
- ...are exposed to too much violence on television, in video games, or in music
- ...haven't been given spiritual or religious education
- ...have family who do not know how to help them
- ...live with people who use alcohol and/or illegal substances
- ...don't live with the same family consistently

[Next Page]

# Community Factors

Choosing from the list below, please **rank** the 2 primary **community**-related reasons for school violence, where 1 is the most important and 2 is the second most important.

Students commit violence because they...

1) Choose One

2) Choose One

Options:

- ...don't have employment or career opportunities
- ...live where there is a lot of unemployment and/or poverty
- ...don't have enough organized recreational activities
- ...are coerced by gangs
- ...are frequently exposed to violence in the community
- ...do not feel that their community cares about them
- ...don't have access to organizations that are a positive influence
- ...live around a lot of illegal activity
- ...don't have access to support services

[Next Page]

**Overall, think about student, school, family, and community factors that contribute to or cause student violence in schools. Please rank them, where "1" is the biggest or primary cause and "4" is the least significant cause.**

1) Choose One

2) Choose One

3) Choose One

4) Choose One

Options:

- Student
- School
- Family
- Community

**Optional – Please identify any other cause(s) of school violence that you believe is important and has not been included in this survey.**

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Thank you for participating in this survey. Your responses will help drive the discussion at the Summit on School Safety Solutions.

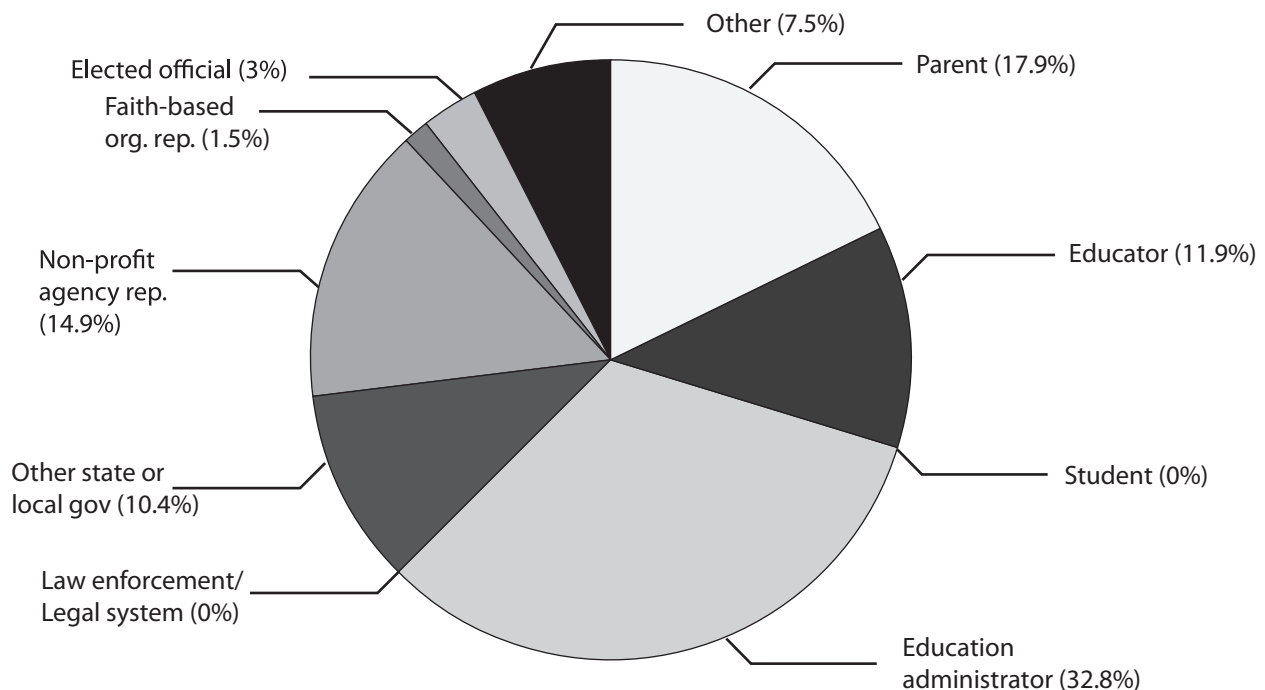
## Appendix C: Pre-summit Survey Results

### Overview of Survey Results – Causes of School Violence

This report contains an overview of the results to the survey titled *Survey – Causes of School Violence*. The results analysis included answers from all respondents who took the survey in the nine-day period from Wednesday, May 14, 2008, to Thursday, May 22, 2008. Sixty nine survey responses were received during that time. One response was completely blank.

**Please choose the role that best describes you (select one):**

Respondent Group	Number of Respondents	% of Total
Education administrator	22	32.8%
Parent	12	17.9%
Non-profit agency representative	10	14.9%
Educator	8	11.9%
Other state or local government agency personnel	7	10.4%
Other (please specify)	5	7.5%
Elected official	2	3.0%
Faith-based organization representative	1	1.5%
Law enforcement/Legal system	0	0.0%
Student	0	0.0%



## Other Responses:

Local school board member (2); Baltimore City Council of PTA's Inc.; County Council PTA; University program director

## Individual Student Factors

Choosing from the list below, please **rank** the 2 primary **student**-related reasons for school violence, where 1 is the most important and 2 is the second most important.

Students commit violence because they...	Rank	Points	% of Total Points
...don't have effective problem-solving skills	1	58	29.0%
...have poor self-discipline	2	26	13.0%

## School Factors

Choosing from the list below, please **rank** the 2 primary **school**-related reasons for school violence, where 1 is the most important and 2 is the second most important.

Students commit violence because they...	Rank	Points	% of Total Points
...are not consistently disciplined when they misbehave	1	40	19.9%
...don't have enough access to school counselors, social workers, school psychologists, and/or other services	2	29	14.4%
...don't have adults they feel they can confide in	2	29	14.4%

## Family Factors

Choosing from the list below, please **rank** the 2 primary **family**-related reasons for school violence, where 1 is the most important and 2 is the second most important.

Students commit violence because they...	Rank	Points	% of Total Points
...haven't been taught values that promote non-violent problem solving	1	59	29.4%
...are not effectively supervised by family	2	35	17.4%

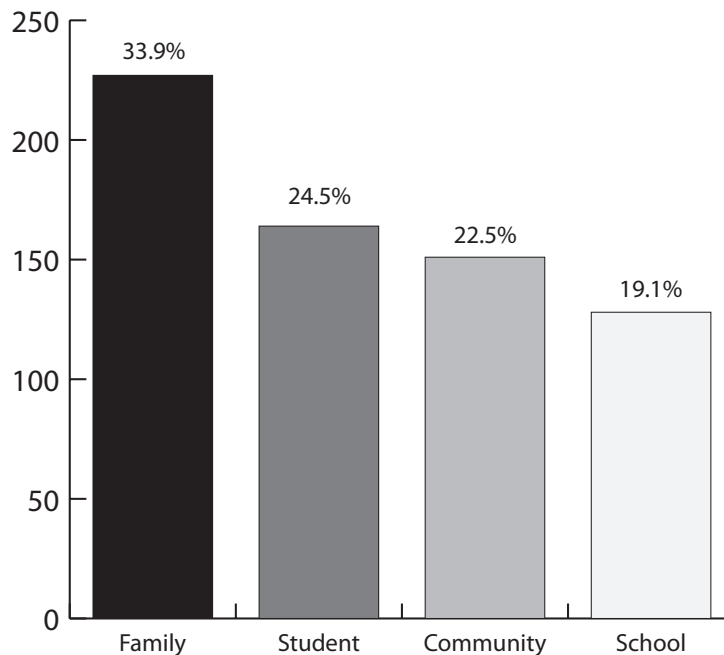
## Community Factors

Choosing from the list below, please **rank** the 2 primary **community**-related reasons for school violence, where 1 is the most important and 2 is the second most important.

Students commit violence because they...	Rank	Points	% of Total Points
...are frequently exposed to violence in the community	1	56	28.4%
...don't have access to organizations that are a positive influence	2	41	20.8%

# Overall, think about student, school, family, and community factors that contribute to or cause student violence in schools.

**Please rank them, where “1” is the biggest or primary cause and “4” is the least significant cause. Optional – Please identify any other cause(s) of school violence that you believe is important and has not been included in this survey.**



- Administrators and teachers are placing too much emphasis on establishing good relationships with students instead of effective discipline. Students know they can typically engage in bad behavior and have minimal or no consequences. Administrators and teachers are not employed to be friends of the students. Something must be done, because the safety of our children is at risk.
- Support of the judiciary and legislative processes.
- Lack of supervision at the schools.
- Lack of connectedness with primarily immediate family followed by positive peer groups
- Sometimes I think that staff don't always talk nicely to students because they don't have to and this affects some of the outcomes between staff and students. Students feel that teachers always have all the rights to say things out of line to students and get away with that and students don't have a voice.
- Policies that prevent school systems and parents from swiftly disciplining students and providing corrective action and support BOTH in school and at home!
- There are no consequences for breaking school rules. Urban principals do not want their schools to be labeled "highly dangerous", which could result in a school closing, therefore, school violence is swept under the rug. Detention is not an effective deterrent for students who are not concerned about failing. Calling parents is ineffective, when many parents are absent. Disruptive students are allowed to remain in school. There are no alternative schools for disruptive students. Academic and behavioral standards are constantly lowered. You have to produce a book to have a disruptive, violent student suspended. In BCPSS schools students who are to be suspended have to have clearance from the superintendent. Parents have to be held

accountable for their children. The onus should not be on the school system alone. Disruptive students should not be allowed to stay in school for the sake of attendance numbers. Suspension in the past meant: a student could not return to school for three days and had to be brought back by a parent. Now, suspension is almost nonexistent, and the student can come back the next day with a parent. In-school suspension doesn't work either. It is sad that policies and procedures for school violence are on the books but not adhered to and students and uncaring parents not it!

- Difficult to survey because a combination of factors contribute - impossible to rank.
- Schools are so focused on academic rigor that they are not connecting with students! Students are walking around without their basic needs being met and are expected to learn. If we actually connected with our students and helped them develop authentic self esteem, performance and moral character, they would be thriving instead of barely surviving.
- Parents who don't trust the system or services offered because they had a bad experience in school as a child. The loss of neighborhood schools. How can students feel a part of their school if they are bused out of their neighborhood school (on the bus many students pass two elementary schools on the way to their school) to another school in a neighborhood across town for demographic, economic and test score number reasons. Community is key. Parents in low income families a lot of times don't have cars and being a \$20 cab ride away hinders their involvement in their child's school and makes relationship building with the school very challenging.
- Lack of access to academic and behavioral resources and vocational training opportunities.
- The students do not know the meaning of consequences for their actions—if they are not held accountable at home they never make the connection to real life.
- Schools do not want to be placed on the danger list. They allow student behavior.
- The school has become the “safe” place for students to stage a “fight” as a result of a community disturbance because they will be stopped and protected before anyone is seriously hurt and they have an audience for the “fight performance.” We needed community based intervention.
- Because the repeat offenders of violence in the schools are allowed to stay and continue to disrupt the learning environment it encourages others to act out as well.
- Two comments. First, we have been at war for 5 years. The World Trade Center attack was nearly 7 years ago. For our children it has been a violent world for much if not all of their lives. And this is violence perpetrated against us by foreign enemies, but also violence which we seem quite capable of returning in kind, up to and including torture. Second, an observation that human beings are innately violent, occasionally this will spill out in shootings and rampages, but that we still have to be careful not to overreact to incidents which get media attention out of proportion to the attention they deserve.
- Lack of communication skills for non-violently resolving conflicts—lack of role models for non-violent conflict resolution—need for skill-based conflict resolution curriculum
- Students who are allowed to bully teachers by name calling and threats create an environment of violence when discipline is NOT stressed and applied school-wide.
- Schools are being forced to allow anti-social, aggressive and even violent behaviors to occur without adequate punishment and/or removal of the student from the school community. Administrators have to follow specific rules, and as a result our non-problematic schools are developing violence/safety issues. A violent student should not be allowed to disrupt or interfere with the education of others. Our schools need to be safe both for the students and the staff. Students who threaten the safety of the school community should be placed in a special school where their issues can be addressed. And their home school could remain safe for those being educated in it.

- Students do not understand that for every “action” there is a “consequence”.
- Peer Pressure
- Lack of Real and meaningful, consistent communication between school administrators and parents. Many parents do not know what behavior their children display at school or that their children are disruptive in school until the damage has gone on too long. One cause of this problem is the Safe School component of the NCLB—school administrators are told to hide this data to keep schools in the safe school category.
- NCLB—Safe School requirements encourage local school systems to HIDE the real student violence numbers!
- Extreme poverty. School resource inequities.
- Because of economic restrictions, schools have to function in a manner not consistent with the amount of attention and care any individual needs to grow and develop in the most positive manner. The schools are doing a great job considering our social design of schooling; one cannot expect the schools to reflect a social world that is ideal when it exists in a social environment that is not.
- Students have not consistently been taught the importance of individual character development. While this is, and should be, the primary responsibility of the family, the fact is that families have not taken this responsibility seriously. Therefore, our schools need to carefully consider how to inculcate relevant, universally-accepted values throughout a child’s school experience—from kindergarten through grade 12. Virtuous people are not violent.
- Lack of coordination between government agencies that leads to difficulty in providing services to families and children prior to the child reaching school age. This coordinated support needs to continue until the child successfully graduates from high school. There is an unrealistic expectation that our schools should educate as well as remedy all of our societal ills. We need to place more emphasis on ensuring that each and every child will value education, come to school prepared to learn, understand what it means to be a life long learner and will become a productive member of society. The financial resources need to be shifted to assisting families and communities when children are young.
- Bullying and harassment of students and the presence of violent solutions highlighted through media coverage. Parents who want to be friends of their children (enablers) thus ignoring their role as parents and ignoring inappropriate behaviors and blaming schools.
- Peer pressure is a major contributor of violence. Letting others know you aren’t afraid to do something in front of a group pulls strongly on a young person.



# Appendix D: Summit Agenda

## *A Summit on School Safety Solutions*

**Presented by:** Congressman Elijah E. Cummings & State Superintendent Nancy S. Grasmick  
Tuesday, June 3, 2008 8:30 a.m. — 4:15 p.m. University of Maryland, Baltimore County



## Agenda

8:30–8:50 a.m.	<b>Registration</b>
8:50–9:00 a.m.	<b>Welcome/Overview of Agenda</b> Master of Ceremonies – Dr. Skipp Sanders
9:00–9:40 a.m.	<b>Remarks</b> Lt. Governor Anthony G. Brown Congressman C. A. Dutch Ruppersberger Congressman John P. Sarbanes Congressman Elijah E. Cummings State Superintendent Nancy S. Grasmick
9:45–10:30 a.m.	<b>Morning Keynote Speaker</b> Ivan Juzang Founder and President, MEE Productions, Inc. <i>“Reaching, Engaging, and Positively Influencing School-Age Youth”</i>
10:35–11:35 a.m.	<b>Panel 1 Discussion</b> Moderator: Congressman Elijah E. Cummings
11:35–12:00 p.m.	<b>Lunch</b>
12:00–12:45 p.m.	<b>Luncheon Keynote Speaker</b> Dr. Sam Goldstein Author, School Psychologist, and Faculty Member University of Utah School of Medicine <i>“Tipping the Scales: Creating Schools that Nurture and Protect Developing Minds”</i>
12:50–1:50 p.m.	<b>Panel 2 Discussion</b> Moderator: Dr. Nancy S. Grasmick
2:00–3:00 p.m.	<b>Breakout Sessions</b>
3:15–4:00 p.m.	<b>Breakout Reports</b>
4:00–4:15 p.m.	<b>Solutions</b> Congressman Cummings / Superintendent Grasmick

*Congressman Cummings and Dr. Grasmick would like to acknowledge the UMBC Division of Student Affairs for providing the facility and excellent support service.*



# Appendix E: Panel Members



## *A Summit on School Safety Solutions*

**Presented by:** Congressman Elijah E. Cummings & State Superintendent Nancy S. Grasmick  
Tuesday, June 3, 2008 8:30 a.m. — 4:15 p.m. University of Maryland, Baltimore County



## Panel Members

### Panel 1 Discussion

**Moderator:** Congressman Elijah E. Cummings

**Mr. Ivan Juzang**

Founder and President, MEE Productions, Inc.

**Chief Marshall T. Goodwin**

Police Chief, Baltimore City Public Schools

**Reverend Benjamin Long**

Rehoboth Light of the World Church

**Ms. Rachel Wohl**

Executive Director, Mediation and Conflict Resolution Office (MACRO)

**Mr. Keith Smith**

Student, Elijah Cummings Youth Program in Israel

**Major Joe Montminy**

Charles County Sheriff's Office

### Panel 2 Discussion

**Moderator:** Dr. Nancy S. Grasmick

**Dr. Sam Goldstein**

Author, School Psychologist and Faculty Member,  
University of Utah School of Medicine

**Mr. Michael Gimbel**

Director, Substance Abuse Education  
Sheppard Pratt Health System

**Mr. Donald Lilley**

Principal, Annapolis High School

**Dr. Lavana Lee Rice-Fitzpatrick**

Adjunct Professor, Coppin State University

**Mr. Brian Schiffer**

Teacher, Baltimore County Public Schools

**Aaron Prince**

Student Ambassador  
Doris M. Johnson at Lake Clifton Complex

# Appendix F: Resource Experts

## *A Summit on School Safety Solutions*

**Presented by:** Congressman Elijah E. Cummings & State Superintendent Nancy S. Grasmick  
Tuesday, June 3, 2008 8:30 a.m. — 4:15 p.m. University of Maryland, Baltimore County



## Resource Experts

**Sharon Boettinger**

Supervisor, Counseling and Student Support  
Frederick County Public Schools

**Karen Brofee**

Superintendent  
Somerset County Public Schools

**Mandela Brown**

Student Ambassador  
Doris M. Johnson at Lake Clifton Complex

**Epiphany Butler**

Student Ambassador  
Doris M. Johnson at Lake Clifton Complex

**Marvin "Doc" Cheatham**

President  
Baltimore City Branch NAACP

**Frank Clark**

Gang Investigation Unit  
Maryland Department of Juvenile Services

**Beverly Cooper**

Vice President  
Maryland State Board of Education

**Rebecca Crawford**

Student  
Elijah Cummings Youth Program in Israel

**Captain Fred W. Damron**

Commander, Southern District  
MTA Police

**LaMar Davis**

Director  
Choice Program, UMBC

**Madiba Dennie**

2007-2008 President  
Maryland Association of Student Councils

**Ranjit (Ron) Dhindsa**

President  
Maryland Leadership Workshops

**Ariel Dye**

Student  
Elijah Cummings Youth Program in Israel

**Clara Floyd**

President  
Maryland State Teachers Association

**Reverend Johnny Golden**

Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance

**Brian Hill**

Student Ambassador  
Doris M. Johnson at Lake Clifton Complex

**Kristin Hooper**

Student  
Elijah Cummings Youth Program in Israel

**Dr. Phil Leaf**

Director  
Johns Hopkins Center for the Prevention of Youth Violence

**Reverend Lovell Parham**

Edmondson Community Organization

**Dale Rauenzahn**

Executive Director  
Student Support Services  
Baltimore County Public Schools

**Colonel Terry Sheridan**

Superintendent, Maryland State Police

**Larry Walker**

2008 Parent Involvement Matters Award Winner

**Jamie Weaver**

Coordinator, Teacher Induction  
Carroll County Public Schools

**Parker Wise**

2008-2009 President  
Maryland Association of Student Councils



**Dr. Nancy S. Grasmick**

*State Superintendent of Schools*

**Congressman Elijah E. Cummings**

*7th Congressional District of Maryland*

**Dunbar Brooks**

*President*

Maryland State Board of Education

**Martin O'Malley**

*Governor*



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